



## 2015 State of the Town.

**Welcome**, my friends! **What a ride!** While I knew that 2014 would be a **good** year, I had no idea that it would turn out to be a **GREAT** year! With the help of veteran councilman Bernie Kolber, Pat Casilio, Peter DiCostanzo, Robert Geiger and a battery of talented department heads, we were able to finish **many** of the projects that had been in the planning stage since 2012 and to continue with several that are **multi-year** in nature. I have listed the projects that we either have completed or are still working on as of 1/22/2015. They are as follows...

1. We were able to cut the tax rate for the **third** year in a row. While outsiders think that Clarence is expensive to live in because of all the large homes, our tax rate is actually one of the **lowest** in Erie County and it **continues** to fall as the Town Board and Department Heads run the Town of Clarence like the **\$21,745,963** dollar business that it is.
2. Under the direction of Town of Clarence Engineering Department Head **Tim Lavocat** and Highway Superintendent **James Dussing**, the Town of Clarence has started a multi-year **flood plan** for the North Country. The Highway Department cleared a **major** obstacle from Tonawanda Creek this summer as well as continuing to clean out **many** of the ditches in the North Country, and Engineering has mapped **most** of the streams that **flood** every spring. The County is in the process of **ditching and repaving** Goodrich Road.
3. Under the direction of Youth Director **Dawn Kinney**, the newly acquired Youth Center on Main St. has undergone a **dramatic** makeover. **New siding** on the front, **extra storage space** in the rear and the **elimination** of the dated **wood paneling** on the inside had turned this former **post office** into a **warm, inviting space** for our youth to meet.
4. The Town Board worked with the **Amherst Town Board** to provide crossing guards from **the Town of Clarence** to **Transit Middle School**. The intersection in front of Transit Middle School is a **disaster**, and it was a matter of time before someone was injured. The new guards will provide **safe passage** for all of the middle school children from the **Town of Clarence** who attend **Transit Middle School** on a daily basis.
5. Under the direction of Highway Superintendent **James Dussing**, the Town of Clarence dispatched lifesaving **high-lift tractors and snowplows** to both Lancaster and Cheektowaga to help clean up from the **November snowstorm**. Lancaster Supervisor **Dino Fudoli** and Cheektowaga Supervisor **Mary Holtz** both expressed their **gratitude** for the **rapid** response of our Highway Department during the crisis, and I received **many letters** from citizens **thanking us** for our generosity in this most **critical** time of need.

6. **Students at The University of Buffalo** completed an analysis of the **Bike Path** that was presented in December to interested **Town Board** and **Department heads of the Town of Clarence**. In addition to an **exhaustive** analysis of the current use of the bike path, the students also presented ideas on how the system could be **improved** in the future. My thanks to Town of Clarence Planner **Jonathan Bleuer** for putting this **unique collaboration together**.
  
7. Under the direction of Parks Superintendent **James Burkard**, the **Parks Department** finished an **NBA quality basketball court** (with a Clarence High School Red Devil logo at center court) in **the park on Goodrich Road**. Also on Goodrich road is a newly striped **Pickelball** court. **Pickleball** started on the West Coast during the 60's and seems to be **growing** in popularity every year. Parks also finished a new bathroom at the **Parker Road baseball field** and installed a **gate** to protect the **entrance** to the main trail at **Beeman Creek Park**.
  
8. In 2014, the birth of the **Cimato Business Park** and the proposed **Business Park on Wehrle Dr.** gave hope that the Town of Clarence would be able to attract **larger** and **more varied businesses** in the future. Larger businesses provide **more jobs** for residents of the Town of Clarence and **more revenue** to help keep taxes low. In the past, many **large to mid-size** companies skipped over Clarence due to our lack of **sewered industrial space**. In order to remedy that ongoing problem, **progress** on the new sewer lines continues. Under the direction of Department Head **Jim Callahan**, the plan is to have **two** new sewer lines-one that runs down **Goodrich Road** from **Main** to **Greiner** and a second line that runs from **Main**, down **Harris Hill** to the Peanut line. The completion of these two new lines is **complex** and **will not happen overnight**, but we continue to **push forward**.
  
9. 2014 saw the **Kittinger Furniture Company** finish the transfer of their headquarters from **Buffalo** to **Clarence** as well as the **expansion** of their new **manufacturing operation** adjacent to the Eastern Hills Mall. This is a **perfect** site for their expansion, and it augments **their retail** store on **Transit Road** which is **less** than two miles away. 2014 also saw the completion of **both Tronconi & Segarra's** new headquarters on Main Street **and** the renovation of **Niagara Produce** on **Transit Road**. In addition, there were many **small** business that opened in Clarence in 2014, which bodes well for the future. **The big push** in 2014 was to add another theme restaurant (Thai, German, and Chinese) or a **craft brewer** to our Main Street Corridor. It turns out we will have **both** in 2015! We have met with several craft brewers, and due to the **easing of regulations** in the State of NY that was enacted in **2012**, this activity will continue well into **2015 and 2016**.

**As look into my crystal ball, what do I see for 2015?**

-Items of interest include the **groundbreaking** for the new **State Police** barracks. The Town Board passed a motion to **bond** the project and work should start **late** in 2015, to be **completed** by summer of **2017**. One of the **key reasons** that the town can keep the taxes **low** is that we **do not** have a **local police department**; the **Erie County Sheriffs** and the **NY State Police** fill that **critical** role for the **Town of Clarence**. This saves the Town over **seven million dollars** a year, which is what it would cost to run **our** own police department. The **State Troopers** will be **paying** the Town of Clarence **rent** on the new barracks, so the whole project is a win-win for **everybody** involved.

2015 will **also** see the **completion** of **Master Plan 2025**, the planning document prepared by the Zoning Office in conjunction with the Planning Board, Town Board and an outside consultant. **Master Plan 2025** will provide the framework for creative, **limited development** in the Town of Clarence for the next **ten years**.

**Business** should continue to **thrive** in 2015 in the Town of Clarence. It looks like there will be no less than **five** craft brewers/brew pubs either in Clarence or along the **Amherst** side of **Transit Road**. As the State of NY continues to **ease** its age-old **brewing regulations**, this **boom** that has **engulfed downtown Buffalo** will **continue** to spread to the suburbs.

Both **Main Street** and **Transit Road** continue to be **hot spots** for new business in 2015. Main Street will benefit by the **completion** Paul Steven new commercial/residential plaza on the corner of **Main Street and Goodrich Road**. This type of commercial project with **residential apartments** above and **commercial office/retail stores** below has become **very popular** in Western New York, and several **additional** projects along Transit Road may be started in 2015.

**Several** small manufactures have expressed interest in **Clarence**, but it is too early to tell if they will become **permanent** residents of our community. Developers continue to build out **new office space**, and **additional** office space in Clarence means that new jobs will continue to come our way. **New jobs** and **lower taxes** are a **winning** combination for us all in the New Year!

**I truly appreciate** you taking the time from your **busy day** to listen to me **detail** some of the **successes of 2014** and **plans for 2015**. Should you have **any** questions or comments, please feel free to **call** me at 741-8930, **email** [dhartzell@clarence.ny.us](mailto:dhartzell@clarence.ny.us) or **stop by** the Supervisors office at Town Hall for a visit. **My door is always open!**

-If there are any questions, I would be **glad** to answer them for you.

Again, **Thank you**, and I hope that you have an **amazing** 2015!